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THE

PARAGRAPH:

A

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT,

IN TWO ACTS.

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

BY PRINCE HOARE.

London:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS,

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1804.

ADVERTISEMENT

BY

THE AUTHOR.

IT has been humorously remarked that the Newspapers possess a more uncontroulable power over a man's body and estate than the Physician, the Lawyer, or even the Sexton himself: that they can make him travel or stand still, laugh or cry, be poor or rich, dead or alive, just as they please. An exercise of this kind of sovereignty, which it was my lot to experience about two years since, suggested the thought of preparing the present Dramatic Sketch for the Theatre: I conceived I owed some good-humoured reply to a set of pleasant writers, who, adopting a jocular rumour in a dearth of news, had thought fit to enclose me in the walls of a prison, for obstinately assisting and abetting a riotous mob *in the face of my native city. Those who were acquainted with me, laughed, no doubt, at the idea of a man, with scarcely more strength of frame than a mouse, valorously heading an Herculean gang of Somersetshire Colliers; but what entertainment the story could afford to others I am at a loss to conjecture.*

Wholly devoid as this report was of foundation, the Great Powers *above mentioned, "Arbiters of daily*

fate," continued for several weeks to descant on my misfortune ; *some kindly bewailing my* imprudence; *others, with still greater complacence towards me, deducing moral warnings from the result of my* misconduct ; *all agreeing in the justice of my* punishment: *nor did I wholly escape some philosophically-benevolent wishes for my* more exemplary suffering, *as well for my own future good, as with a view to the same furtherance of general admonition.*

If, by a change of incidents, the above trifling anecdote has been in any degree converted to the amusement of the Public, I shall be pardoned this mention of a circumstance which has probably been long since forgotten by all but myself, and which the favourable reception given to THE PARAGRAPH *has alone emboldened me to call to their recollection.*

To the critical reader it will be superfluous to say, that the hint of the last Scene in my second Act was originally taken from a little Comedy of Sir John Vanbrugh ; but, disguised and incorporated, as it is, with the preceding Scenes, I fairly doubt whether that great Dramatic Writer would do me the honour to own it.

May 2, 1804.

PROLOGUE,

WRITTEN BY

WILLIAM HOARE, ESQ.

IN these our times, while danger bids us arm,
What Paragraphs from France the town alarm!
What Armies, Camps, Flotillas, ev'ry hour,
Rush forth, *in print*, our Island to devour!
Till one grand Paragraph o'erspreads the plains
With forces greater than all France contains!
But Englishmen, whatever Tyrants threat them,
Prove 'tis as hard to frighten, as to beat them.
What! not a nerve, that quakes? No sense of fear?
No—for each Briton is a Volunteer.
See a whole Nation, in its Country's cause,
Rise to protect her freedom and her laws!
All share the Soldier's toil;—yet faithful still
Each task of private station to fulfil!
Thus, unimpair'd, our envied commerce reigns,
And ev'n, 'midst arms, her wonted course maintains.
To-night our Author's humble Paragraph
Means not to frighten, but to make you laugh.
He knows what *English* Paragraphs should be—
The voice of Truth, inspired by Liberty.
If not a word ascend to Beauty's ear,
But what he wishes the whole House to hear;
If neither German, French, nor Spanish, stealing,
Yet of old English scenes he show some feeling;
Ye British Fair, in smiles of Nature deck'd,
Be *yours* his cause!—his efforts *you* protect!—
Ah!—should your frowns o'ercast this night with sorrow,
Ah! think! what *Paragraphs* he'll read to-morrow!

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Toppit.....Mr. MUNDEN.
Frank Toppit (his Nephew).....Mr. FAWCETT.
Field-Air (an Apothecary).....Mr. BLANCHARD.
Herbert (his Nephew).....Mr. BRAHAM.
Sir George Rattle, Major Yawn, Baron Bias.....Fashionable Friends of Frank Toppit — Mr. CLAREMONT. Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. KLANERT.
Solomon (Mr. Toppit's Steward).....Mr. EMERY.
Jervis (Clerk to Frank Toppit).....Mr. DAVENPORT.
Servant to Old Toppit.....Mr. TRUMAN.
Servant to Frank Toppit.....Mr. CURTIES.

Mrs. Toppit.....Mrs. DAVENPORT.
Eliza (her Niece).....Signora STORACE.

Servants, Undertakers, Neighbours, &c. &c.

SCENE—Partly in London, and partly in a Country Town.

THE

PARAGRAPH.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A COUNTING-HOUSE.—*Large books open.*

JERVIS *seated at a desk.*

JERVIS.

LOSS on stock, 5000l.—Goods, 3000l.—India bonds, 1500l.—Speculation scrip, 2500l.—Total deficiency, 12,000l. By this statement my young master, Toppit, may be seen in the Gazette within these three weeks. His proceedings must have reached his uncle's ears, or the aunt and sister would not have been sent up from the country, to go back again in such a hurry. It's no great journey, it's true; but of what use could their visit be? He takes care to put a good face on his affairs, and that is all they see of them. This it is to be a pretty fellow! Frank Toppit knows something of philosophy, something of politics, something of languages, something of history,

 something

something of music, something of fencing, dancing—in short, there is but one thing of which he knows nothing—that's his business.—Here he comes, to learn the result of his vanity and extravagance.

Enter FRANK TOPPIT, *hastily, the collar of his coat torn.*

Frank. My dear Jervis! do step down stairs, and save me!

Jervis. What is the matter, Sir?

Frank. Here, look at my collar! that will explain what is the matter.—It's well my mother and Eliza were off again before this happened.—Three writs out against me at the same time: three at once—something neat in that—eh, Jervis? Egad, it was lucky my coat was town-made: the clumsy stout stiches of a country taylor would have dragged me to a spunging-house. A taylor of fashion knows his man better—knows how to put a coat on your back philosophically, to suit the laws of motion, eh, Jervis? Hark! surely the bailiffs are coming up stairs. My dear fellow, step and tell them that I have taken my leave—that I am gone off in a balloon, shot myself with a tinder-box, hang'd myself in the bell-rope, drown'd myself in the wash-hand bason—any *congé* you think the neatest, so that you do but get them out of the house.

Jervis. I'll try my best to serve you; but——

Frank. No; a plague of your *buts*; if you will make a *but*, let it be against the stomachs of the bailiffs. *(pushes him out.)* I have ventured through the warehouse for the last time. I hate that

that warehouse. To be sure it's useful; but it's confoundedly mortifying for an elegant fellow—brilliant, in the best company all the evening, to wake in the morning to a warehouse, and a dowlas apron.—The devil! they're at the door! *(looks out.)* Egad, it's worse—Here's my sister come back, and my aunt, I suppose, after her.—What's the matter, Eliza?

Enter ELIZA.

Eliza. Oh, Frank, I'm so frightened!—My aunt was just getting into the carriage, and I thought I wou'd come up once more, and wish you good by.

Frank. (aside.) I wish you had staid where you were.

Eliza. But, as I was coming up stairs, I saw three men, with the most ugly frowning faces, go into the drawing-room.

Frank. Oh,—servants, waiting to know if I will hire them. I have been obliged to turn away a servant or two, this week; and these fellows, I suppose, are come for their places.

Eliza. I don't like their countenances.

Frank. No? that's for want of being used to London. You meet such faces here, in many of the most respectable families. You have no idea of fashion. You think all faces must be like that of your constant fool of a lover, in the country.

Eliza. And why a fool, pray?

Frank. Because he is in the country. I dare say *you* don't wish to see the world!

Eliza. Not in smoke and fog.

Frank. Nor to dash away in the Park amongst the young fashionables!

Eliza. Not I indeed.

Frank. Nor to go to concerts, balls, assemblies——

Eliza. No, no; give me green fields, the music of the birds, companions I can converse with, and friends I can love.

Frank. Gothic!

AIR.——ELIZA.

How soft is the sleep of the cot,
Where the peasant, unenvied, is laid
How happy, tho' lowly, the lot
Of the innocent, poor village maid!

The jessamine twines round her bow'r,
In the fragrance of nature array'd,
And the gem of content is the dow'r
Of the innocent, poor village maid!

Oh, happy village lasses,
Their simple joys possessing!
Oh, blithe each hour that passes
Along the rosy day!

The shepherd's reed—
The verdant mead—
The waving corn—
The winding horn—
The lowing herds—
The tuneful birds;—

These

These simple joys possessing,
Oh, happy village lasses!
Sweet health each moment blessing,
And smiles the heart expressing,
As bright as flow'rs of May!

[*Exit* Eliza.

Frank. Thank the fates! she's off again.—O, Jervis?

Enter JERVIS.

Well, are they gone, lad?

Jervis. This once I have saved you, tho' not without some little sacrifice of truth.

Frank. Psha! never mind that. You know, all history says—You don't know history, Jervis, do you? That's a pity—it's a neat thing to know a little of history—It says, that to save a friend, you may do a little wrong now and then. How did you get them off?

Jervis. I told them you certainly expected remittances from your uncle this week, and that he would, perhaps, be in town in the course of it.

Frank. Bravo, my Fabius Maximus! If I had told them but half so improbable a lie, they would not have believed it; but that shamefaced tongue of thine gets credit for any thing.

Jervis. What else could I say, Sir?

Frank. Why, if they know any thing, they must know that my uncle wou'd as soon put his head into the fire as into this house again.

Jervis. And he might do it nearly with the same degree of safety.

Frank.

Frank. Accounts plaguy bad, eh?

Jervis. They cannot be worse.

Frank. Ay, this I owe to my father's leaving me so early to a crabbed uncle, who throws the burden of his old debts upon my shoulders, and goes to live at his ease in the country. Nothing but his cursed spirit of indolence.

Jervis. Come, come, Mr. Toppit, there has been one cause more.

Frank. What's that?

Jervis. Your blessed spirit of idleness.

Frank. Idleness! What, the devil, do you mean? It's not in my nature. No, no; I'm pretty well known for one of the busiest young fellows about town.—Name to me, if you can, a single public place, Opera, Playhouse, Ranelagh, Vauxhall, Sadler's Wells, Astley's, Circus, Dibdin's, French Readings, Mammoths, Panoramas, Phantasmagorias, Invisible Girls—name to me one of them where I miss going every night—I mean, one after another.—I cannot be at them all at once. Oh! I wish I could—I'd be there, my lad; I'd shew you I'm not idle——

Jervis. In ruining yourself.

Frank. In winter, at all the fashionable teas, cards, at-homes, balls, fancy balls, masqued balls, dress-balls, undress-balls—Egad, I'm at home at every one of them.—Acting partner, eh, Jervis? Then, in summer, every fashionable music meeting every watering-place, bathing-place—sea-bathing—hot-bathing—cold-bathing—earth-bathing—sand-bathing—mud-bathing; every water-drinking, wine-drinking, dancing, gaming, racing, fiddling town of resort in the kingdom—do I miss one of

of 'em?—At 'em all; make the most of it; never fail a single party any where.—Now, please to tell me, Sir, how you can call this idleness?

Jervis. And what's the consequence of all this?

Frank. Why, that I enjoy myself; am the happiest dog in the universe—Every body says so. To be busy is to be happy—that's practical morality. You know nothing of practical morality, do you, Jervis? Pity! It's a neat thing to know a little of practical morality.

"*Jervis.* Does your own heart say you are "happy?

"*Frank.* Psha! let the girls look to my heart. "I'll tell you, Jervis, I should be devilish happy, "if there were not always some unlucky thwart, "that crosses me in full chace.

"*Jervis.* I don't understand you, Sir.

"*Frank.* No—I don't know how you should— "that's philosophy.—I'll explain by matter of "fact.

"*Jervis.* If you please.

"*Frank.* Well, there was the other night we "made a party to the Opera, to hear the "new singer—Sir George and I were to de- "cide on her voice.—You know nothing of "music, eh, Jervis?—We were to settle the pub- "lic opinion; absolute judges—neat, eh? Egad, "I got such a confounded cold at a Gala in the "morning, that, when I came to the Opera, I "could not hear a note—Plaguy vexatious, was "not it?

"*Jervis.* Sadly so.

"*Frank.* Then there was the Countess of ——

"I sha'n't mention names—whom the Baron and "I had been quarrelling for; she sent me an ap- "pointment for a tête-à-tête a few evenings since, "at a certain house—I sha'n't mention places.— "Egad, I got so plaguy drunk at dinner, that I "forgot the street, and the Baron met her the "next day.—Now was not that cursed unlucky, "Jervis?"

Jervis. You had better been thinking of your business, Sir.

Frank. What d'ye call this but business? What's life, if you don't make the most of it? Brilliant's your word; I'm resolved to be as happy a fellow as ever ——

Jervis. Came into a Gazette.

Frank. Gazette? What, bankrupt? That will never do.—What would my uncle say to that?

Jervis. You must be there next week, or worse.

Frank. My dear Jervis, are you serious?

Jervis. There's too much reason to be so.

Frank. Then so will I be likewise. Don't imagine that, while I am gay and laughing, you see the whole of my character.—No, no, Jervis, I have another side—Study; I have studied deeply—have read, Sir—You know nothing of reading, Jervis, do you? Pity!—it's a neat thing to have a little reading—I know Cæsar and Ovid, and Scipio. *(he takes* Jervis's *hand with great earnestness)* Give me your advice, Jervis—you know I never asked you for it before.

Jervis. You will not be much disposed to hear it now.

Frank. Not to save myself from ruin, Jervis? Come,

Come, sit down. (*draws two chairs and seats himself*) Let us have an hour or two of sober conversation. (*looks round him*) There is no glass in this room.

Jervis. The better for you, Sir—You cannot see *yourself.*

Frank. The worse, Jervis—I cannot see one of my best-looking friends. But now, Jervis, to avoid the Gazette—Speak—I know your worth, and shall pay the utmost attention to all that you propose.

Jervis. (*seating himself*) Your difficulties, Sir, are considerable.

Frank. They are the devil, Jervis: but I rely on your advice.

Jervis. They arise from three points.

Frank. Three at once again? That's neat yet, eh, Jervis? Well, what are they?

Jervis. First, the want of punctuality to your correspondents.

Frank. Well—

Jervis. Next, the want of attention to yourself.

Frank. My dear fellow!—but, go on.

Jervis. And, last—the want of credit on 'Change.

Frank. (*beginning to be absent*) Yes.

Jervis. Therefore, the best thing you can begin with is——

Frank. Is it three o'clock?

Jervis. Sir!

Frank. Oh—I beg pardon—You said the best thing I cou'd do———

Jervis. Would be, to examine, minutely, the state of your affairs.

Frank. Is that all? I'll do it now—You see I'm in earnest. Give me the books.

Jervis. (brings one from the desk) Here they are.

Frank. (sits down, and begins to look in the book) You'll not object to Thomas just cutting my hair, while I am reading. It won't interrupt any thing. Here, Tom!

Enter THOMAS.

Put my hair a little in order—Now, give me the book, and we can do both these things at once. *(draws his chair forward, sits down, and takes the folio book on his knees*—Thomas *returns with powdering apron, &c. and begins to trim his hair.*—Frank *reads)* " Ro—ro—ro—" (*to* Thomas) Quite out of shape, is not it? " Ro—ro—ro—" don't cut the points too short.—" Ro, ro, ro—" Have you——very bad i'faith! Have you done, Thomas?—" Ro—ro—ro—" the devil and all!—Make haste, Thomas.—" Ro, ro, ro"—There, brush off those loose hairs—" Ro, ro, ro"— We must keep clear of the Gazette. (*rises from his chair*) [*Exit* Thomas] Hark ye, Jervis, this is serious indeed! Suppose I go down with you to my uncle in the country, promise to alter my mode of life, and entreat him to settle the loss.

Jervis. Consider how this would affect your uncle's nervous state of health.

Frank.

Frank. Nay, if I shew him how sincere I am in my intention of reform—(*clock strikes*) Striking now—two—three— (*knock at the door*) There's the Baronet—punctual to his time, egad!—What, the devil, is the matter? Jervis, I had quite forgot that we are to meet Ned Yawn and the little Baron this morning. Very elegant fellows—neat company, eh, Jervis?

Jervis. But, Sir——

Frank. I must be with them—They're going to the Villarets, and I would not be left out of the party for the world.

Jervis. But the Gazette, Sir.

Frank. Rot the Gazette! (*a knock*) Dear Jervis, do exert yourself for me!—Make out a statement of my accounts, and, to-morrow, we'll go off together to my uncle.

Jervis. But, Sir, you must likewise furnish me with a list of your own private debts.

Frank. A list of my debts? You have plenty of paper, I hope, in the desk. 'Gad, I wish these fellows had not called—I'll do it now, while I'm in a serious mood.

Jervis. Do, Sir, for your own sake. Shall I say you are busy, or not at home?

Frank. Ay, by all means—You'll find Sir George and his brother below, and tell them—— (*knock again*) Oh, the devil—there is the little Baron, for a thousand pounds—My dear Jervis, *guess* at my debts; you'll make a pretty just account, and I'll sign it—I dare say 'twill be as right as if I did it myself. *(going)* But, d'ye hear?—Make the most of it.

Sir George. (*within*) Hollo! Hollo! Toppit!

Frank. Have with ye, lads!—How are ye?—Now, for Heaven's sake, Jervis, make the statement clear and accurate, fit for a gentleman in the country to comprehend.—Huzza! my boys! I'm among ye!—We'll set out early to-morrow, Jervis; don't lose time: I'm sorry I cann't stay, but—How are ye, how are ye, lads? Tol lol de rol! [*Exit singing*]

Jervis. Aye, it all ends in the old tune. [*Exit*

SCENE II.

A Garden Arbour.

At a Table are seated Field Air *and* Herbert. *A bowl of punch on the table.*

Field Air. Ha! ha! ha! May I die, Herbert, ay and of medicine too, if you don't shame me in my own profession! I had forgot there were so many hard words belonging to it. But hold! here comes a subject more interesting.

Enter Eliza.

Field Air. Welcome from town, Miss Eliza! My nephew has been amusing himself in your absence with instructing me in all the technical terms of medicine.

Herbert. You have made me repeat them, Sir, for your diversion, but I am as ignorant of their meaning as——

Field.

Field. A country apothecary, I presume—I thank ye for the compliment.

Eliza. Herbert cannot mean that, Sir, because *you* are one—and I have heard our Rector say that you have more learning than all the doctors of physic in town.

Field. I hate the forms of it.

Eliza. Then I am sure they contribute nothing to the cure of sickness; else you are too charitable not to make use of them.

Field. I would play my part in a Farce to serve any one, with all my heart; but the whole good I can do in medicine lies in few words, and may be told in plain English.

Herbert. But if you assumed, Sir, a little more importance, and were a little freer of your medicines, would you not be a richer man?

Field. A richer rogue, I might be—As a man, Herbert, when I hear the blessings of those I have been happy enough to restore from a bed of sickness, I am richer than if the wealth of Mexico were enclosed in a single fee. Come, let us have the song you promised to learn by the time Eliza returned from town.

Herbert. Will you have the hunting song, or—

Field. No, no; the Britannia. I love, as well as any man, the healthful echo of the horn and the woods; but the song that awakes the love of my country is nobler music, for it draws its echo from the heart.

AIR.

AIR.——HERBERT.

I.

Behold the Britannia! how stately and brave
She floats on the ambient tides!
For empire designed, o'er the turbulent waves
How trim and how gallant she rides!
Yet love in a true Briton's heart
With glory contends for a part;
And the fair cheek of beauty with tears is impearl'd,
When the banner, the banner of war is unfurl'd.

II.

On the shore how alert, how intrepid her crew;
How firm at their Sovereign's command!
Or dauntless o'er ocean his foes to pursue,
And die for the cause of their land!
Yet one tear, ere the heroes depart,
One sigh shall be drawn from the heart;
One kiss on the cheek with sweet sorrows impearl'd,
When the banner, the banner of war is unfurl'd.

III.

Now forth to the contest! The battle swells high,
And fierce round the vessel it roars:
Hark! The sons of Britannia "To victory!" cry,
And victory sounds to our shores.
Then peaceful again to their home
Shall the *Patriot Warriors* come;
No more the fair cheek shall with tears be impearl'd,
But the banner of Peace stand for ever unfurl'd.

[*As the Air finishes, enter a* Servant *who whispers* Field Air.

Field. (*laughs*) Ha! ha! your uncle, Miss Toppit, cannot tell what to do with his money.

Eliza. How so, Sir?

Field. He has sent for me at last: ha! ha! ha! Well, I shall cure him. Say I'll come to him in an hour.

Eliza. An hour! Oh, dear Mr. Field Air, unless you send him something, he'll never live an hour after once sending for you.

Field. What! Medicine? Here, tell Julep to fill a couple of phials with this rum punch, and send them to old Mr. Toppit—*to be taken directly*, d'ye mark?—Julep understands how to manage it. (*gives the bowl of punch to the Servant*) [*Exit* Servant] What is your uncle so fond of physic?

Eliza. He takes more physic than food—He never reads a newspaper, that he does not fancy he has all the complaints he finds in the advertisements. But, while I was in town yesterday with my aunt, I think I hit on a method to cure him.

Field. You hit on a method to cure him! pray let us hear what that was.

Eliza. Without saying a word to any one, I sent a Paragraph to the papers, which come to us here in the country twice a week, giving a full account of his having died of taking physic.

Field. Died of taking physic! Ha! ha! ha! Well, no one could say he did not die a natural death. However, I'll take care *that* shall not happen.—And now, I suppose, as you are just met, you have a word or two to say to each other. (*going*) But, hark ye! don't get out of sight and hearing,

hearing, and give my servant the trouble of coming to look for you. [*Exit* Field Air.

Eliza. Herbert! you thought, I suppose, that I should never come back again.

Herbert. I own, I fear'd your brother might wish to detain you with him.

Eliza. There was no fear of that. Besides, I have a quarrel with him for abusing you.

Herbert. Me!

Eliza. What d'ye think he call'd you?—A constant fool: I believe you are a little bit of one.

Herbert. Ay, and shall always be so.

Eliza. Is that true?

DUET.——HERBERT AND ELIZA.

Eliza. By the gentle vows of love,
By the sighs that pity move,
By the lightly stealing tear,
By the fondly jealous fear,
By the meed to honour due,
Will you promise to be true?

Herbert. Yes;—I promise to be true.

Herbert. By the pang that absence knows,
By the faith that constant glows,
By the lover's tender kiss,
By his hopes of lasting bliss,
By his joys for ever new,
Will you promise to be true?

Eliza. Yes;—I promise to be true.

Both.

Both. Then, thus uniting, we defy
Cares that vex, and hours that fly,
Content a mutual fate to prove,
Beneath the sway of mighty love.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III.

A CHAMBER.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. TOPPIT. *Mrs.* TOPPIT *takes a chair. Mr* TOPPIT *is dressed in a morning gown, and large party-coloured nightcap; he walks to and fro in the room.*

Toppit. So—that's all you can tell me of my nephew, Frank.

Mrs. Toppit. I can tell you nothing, unless you stand still.

Toppit. I cannot stand still, my dear: exercise is good for the breath before meals. Did not Sir Hiera Picra, when I came into the country to be a gentleman, did not he order me to walk twelve times across my chamber every morning? There, that's five. I wonder you don't get up, and exercise yourself after your journey.—Six.

Mrs. Toppit. I exercise my patience, Mr. Toppit.

Toppit. Ay, my dear, the doctor too exercises his patients. Aha! pretty lively for a sick gentleman in the country!—Seven.

Mrs. Toppit. Mr. Toppit, I wonder you're not asham'd to make yourself so ridiculous. What would people think if they could see you in town?

Toppit. Eight.—Don't put me out. I'm determined never to be seen in town again.

Mrs. Toppit. How can you expect to be well, when you are every hour taking physic?

Toppit. Nine.—Now that's the reason I am not so well as I was last week.

Mrs. Toppit. What's the reason?

Toppit. Ten.—Because I have not taken a single dose of physic these five days. I yearn for a draught.—Eleven.—I hope, when the new apothecary comes, he will order me something, if it be only to comfort my stomach and nerves.—Twelve—there!

Mrs. Toppit. Order you! he is more likely to disorder you: what should an apothecary in the country know about you? Have not you taken all Sir Hiera Picra's prescriptions for these five years past?

Toppit. Fie, fie, my dear! Sir Hiera Picra never ordered me a medicine in my life, that didn't do me some good or other. Thank Heaven! with my set of complaints, if a medicine misses its aim at the disorder it is intended for, ten to one it hits one or two of the others. It is an ill wind that blows me no good.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Lady Clatterall is below, Ma'am, and will be glad to ask you how you do; and Mrs. Twattle, Ma'am, and Mrs. Scream, and the five Miss Screams.

Mrs. Toppit. Shew them into the parlour directly. [*Exit* Servant.] Come to hear all the news about Frank in London, I dare say. How

charitable in them to call! I should be quite moped without a few friends, at such a distance from London. [*Exit Mrs.* Toppit.

Toppit. Mrs. Scream and the five Miss Screams! Mercy on me! a few friends! Good company my wife calls them; but I don't know what they are good for, except to chatter you to death with talking till night, in a morning's visit, and to eat you out of house and home in a Sandwich. If it were not for this perpetual visiting, what a blessing the repose of the country would be! Every thing is quiet here except the tongue. Eh! what, the devil! are they coming to hunt me in my nightcap?

Enter ELIZA.

Oh! is it you, Eliza?

Eliza. Now let me try if I can manage my uncle. *(aside)* Herbert is below, Sir,—he—

Toppit. I cannot see him—I am not well enough to speak to any one to-day, except my new apothecary, and I expect him every moment.

Eliza. Herbert came to inquire, Sir—

Toppit. I cannot be spoken to, I tell you.

Eliza. To inquire, Sir, how your health is; that's all.

Toppit. Oh, my health—my health is—

Eliza. You look very ill, Sir, to-day.

Toppit. Eh! do I?

Eliza. You have had some attack of the bile, Sir.

Toppit. Bile! I'm floated in it.

Eliza. Herbert said so yesterday—

Toppit. Ay, did he? He is a very good lad.

Eliza. And he shews so sincere a regard for—

Toppit. Don't talk of his regard.

Eliza. For your health, Sir.

Toppit. My health's at an end, child.

Eliza. And so is his, Sir, he declares—unless you consent to his taking——

Toppit. Taking! well, what is he going to take?

Eliza. To his taking *me*, Sir.

Toppit. Pshaw! you are a silly girl, and he is a silly young man. Has not he his living to get? A wife is an impediment. He'll do much better without you. If he must take any thing, let him take some physic.

DUET.—ELIZA AND TOPPIT.

Eliza. With love, my dear Sir, my poor Herbert grows wild;
I cannot but pity his pain.

Toppit. His uncle's a doctor, my dear silly child,
Desire him to open a vein.

Eliza. From my love if I part,
It will break your girl's heart;
You'll be kind, and comply.

Toppit. No, I sha'n't.

Eliza. You know a good wife
Is the comfort of life.

Toppit. Yes—look at my comfort—your aunt!

Eliza. Take pity—

Toppit. Take physic—

Eliza. Weigh—

Toppit. Simples—

Eliza. His suit!
His candour—

Toppit. Magnesia.
Eliza. His love!
Toppit. Arrow-root.
Eliza. You know a good wife
Is the comfort of life.
Toppit. Yes—look at my comfort—your aunt!

Eliza. If love, my dear Sir, in the bosom beat high,
Toppit. Take salts, the best drug in the shops.
Eliza. Ah, Sir! could you hear him so tenderly sigh,
Toppit. I'd prescribe him some peppermint drops.
Eliza. Nay, nay, you're in joke—
Toppit. You my colic provoke.
Eliza. Deign, Sir, with a word to agree.
Ah! think how delighted,
By Hymen united!
Toppit. Yes—behold Mrs. Toppit and me.
Eliza. Take pity!
Toppit. Take pills.
Eliza. Weigh his constancy!
Toppit. Manna.
Eliza. His tears!
Toppit. Glauber salts.
Eliza. Heart ache!
Toppit. Ipecacuanha.
Eliza. Ah! think how delighted,
By hymen united!
Toppit. Yes—behold Mrs. Toppit and me.

[*Exit* Eliza.

Toppit. I am glad she is gone. She gave me the colic: but I am used to the colic now—It's grown a sort of old friend—calls on me every morning to amuse me. When I first came into the

the country, how heavy the time hung upon me! but I no sooner began to have these slight touches of the colic, than, what between taking my stomachic elixir, my pilulæ salutiferæ, my acid muriatic oxygen gas, and three or four quarts of soda water, the day runs off my hands as pleasantly as possible.—There's such a heavenly calm in the country! nothing to hurry one, as one has in town. *(Rings the bell)* I wonder the doctor don't come.—Plague of these bells, they are so ill hung, there's no making them ring. Ay, the repose of the country—that's the point—the silence of it.—Why, John! Thomas! *(loud)* What, the devil, is in you all? So, there's no one to answer, but Solomon, and he's as dull as a post.

Enter SOLOMON *with two Phials.*

Solomon. Saving your presence, Sir, mought I come in?

Toppit. Come in! why, didn't you hear the bell ring?

Solomon. Yes, yes; I heard you pulling the bell-string soundly; but the other lads, in the servants' hall, say they don't mind that.

Toppit. The devil, they don't!

Solomon. No—they don't come, they says, till they loike; for my part, I loikes to come, and so I be come. I be afraid some mischief be come to you, when you pull so main hard; and I'd be sorry you shou'd come to any harm while I be so near you in the house.

Toppit. Thank ye, Solomon.

Solomon. Here be two cruets come from the doctor.

doctor. *(shews phials)* But don't you take 'em, master—don't you—you'll excuse I—but you be a good sort of master on the whole; and I'd be main sorry—I would indeed—that you shou'd come to harm while I'm in the house. Don't take doctor's stuff.

Toppit. Let me see the draughts directly. Blockhead! how shou'd you know what the doctor's medicine will do?

Solomon. Od dang it! I lived servant with a doctor iseself; I knows what is there well enough.

Toppit. And what is there, pray?

Solomon. No, no; I lost a good place once already by telling: I wonno' lose another, I warrant me. *(looks out)* Dang it! yonder is Dr. Field Air stopping his beast at the gate.

Toppit. Run down directly and desire him to walk up.

Solomon. Yes, I will; but don't ye take the stuff, master.

Toppit. Be gone, you dunce!

Solomon. Now don't you!

Toppit. Be gone, I tell you—run.

Solomon. Well, well—— [*Exit.*

Toppit. I'll get a draught down before the doctor comes, that he may judge of its effects. *(looks at the label) To be taken directly*, oh, that's lucky! *(swallows it and smacks his lips)* Stomachic—Ay, I knew my stomach was out of order.—Tastes something like punch; a nervous cordial, I suppose. Yes, my nerves are the thing.

Field Air. (without) Let my lad put the horses under

under shelter; and fetch them a quart of warm ale each from the public-house.

Toppit. A quart of warm ale from the public-house! So, he prescribes for his horse. This is a country apothecary indeed.

Enter FIELD AIR, *ushered in by* SOLOMON.

Solomon. (draws his master aside) I say—Sir—I wish to speak a word with you—don't take that stuff.

Toppit. Get away, you blockhead! (*drives* Solomon *off.*)

Field Air. I am sorry I could not obey your summons with more speed.

Toppit. Oh Doctor! I was beginning to grow very ill, till your draughts came.

Field. Have you taken them?

Toppit. Only one.

Field. It has done you no harm, I'll answer for it.

Toppit. Harm! I'm quite sure of that.

Field. What are your complaints, Sir? You look very hearty.

Toppit. (with an air of the greatest solemnity) Feel my pulse.

Field. (feels his pulse) Very well.

Toppit. Now put your hand to my forehead.

Field. (does as directed) Very well.

Toppit. Now see how my hand trembles when I hold the phial.

Field. Very well.

Toppit. And now judge yourself, Doctor—what do you say is the matter with me?

Field. Ha! ha! ha! Nothing.

Toppit.

Toppit. What! nothing the matter? It was but yesterday I got up before sun-rise, to enjoy the country, and I returned to breakfast with a lumbago and cough.

Field. How long have you been ill, Sir?

Toppit. Many years, Doctor; sit down if you please; *(they take chairs)* many years; but never so bad as since I left off business, and came into the country for my health.

Field. You wanted amusement.

Toppit. No, no; I had no want of that; for I took to studying physic. I was amazed, Doctor, to find how ignorant I was: I didn't even know how many disorders there were in the world.—Little by little I learnt the names of them; and, as I went on, I found I had most of them myself: and what is more, Doctor, I found out what had been the cause of all my illness.

Field. Ay, what was that?

Toppit. It was all owing to a sneeze.

Field. A sneeze?

Toppit. A sneeze: but *such* a sneeze, Doctor! it shook my sides, disordered my vitals, and soon reduced me to this lamentable condition. What do you think could be the occasion of it?

[Field Air *turns to* Toppit *with an air of great importance.* Toppit *looks in expectation of something extraordinary.*—Field Air *pulls off his nightcap.*

Field. This.

Toppit. What, it's too thin, is it? I have thirty-six of them, all of different sizes, and degrees of warmth, which I wear according to the temperature of the weather.—This is numero eight.

Field. *(flings away the cap)* Go out and take a walk.

Toppit. Eh! take a what?

Field. A walk. Good morning!

Toppit. What, are you going, Doctor? Won't you prescribe for me?

Field. You don't want medicine.

Toppit. Not want it? What am I to take for my lumbago?

Field. A glass of Port.

Toppit. And what for my cough?

Field. A pint of warm ale.

Toppit. Zounds! why that's what you prescribe for your horse.

Field. D'ye ever take rum punch?

Toppit. Cannot touch it—it kills me, tears the coats of my stomach to atoms.—Oh my colic!—I'll take the other draught. (*drinks it*) If I were only to taste the value of a thimblefull of rum punch, I should never speak after it.—Won't you send me some more of these comforting draughts?

Field. Not a drop.

Toppit. Not a few pills?

Field. Neither pill nor potion.

Toppit. Zounds! but I *will* have some more physic.

Field. You sha'n't have it from me.

Toppit. Give me leave to ask you one question, Sir—Are you an apothecary?

Field. At your service; the only one in the village.

Toppit. And pray, Sir, how do you live?

Field. Ha! ha! ha! I live by my farm.

Toppit. Your farm!

Field. And my patients.

Toppit. Patients! I suppose you have none.

Field. Pardon me; I can shew you a dozen of them now at work on my farm—Do you want six load of straw?

Toppit. Eh!

Field. Just threshed out by some neighbouring gentlemen, who came from the race-ball with obstructed perspiration.—Are you supplied with fire-wood for the winter? nicely sawed and cut by some rheumatic ladies, who caught cold by leaving off their stays, and going with their arms and shoulders bare.

Toppit. And this is your mode of prescription?

Field. It never fails of cure.

Toppit. But if the patient has no particular complaint, but is still very ill all over, like me.

Field. Why, in that case, when the patient is nervous and weak, I make him follow the plough; and when he is nervous and strong, I make him *draw* it.

Toppit. Draw the plough! Doctor, I see you don't want my custom; therefore, with your leave, I'll call for your horses.

Field. Ha! ha! ha! I must cure him in his own way, I see. *(aside)* To be honest with you, Mr. Toppit—

Toppit. You may be as honest as you please; but, to be honest with *you*, I don't think you're an apothecary.

Field. Ha! ha! ha! I have invented—

Toppit. I don't care for your inventions:—good morning. *(Waits on him, as wishing him to go.)*

Field. Nay, won't you hear?

Toppit. Not a word.

Field. I have invented *a lozenge—(loud.)*

Toppit. A lozenge! don't go, Doctor.

[*Draws* Field-Air *back again.*

Enter Mrs. TOPPIT.

Mrs. T. My dear, the ladies all desire to see you. I told them you were in your nightcap, and they are so good as to excuse it: but I see you are dressed—I'll bring 'em up directly.

Toppit. I am not dressed—If they come up, I shall lay my death at your door. Don't you see I'm with the Doctor?

Field. Don't let me prevent the ladies, I beg.

Mrs. T. Oh, that I could give you a taste for good company! *I must* bring them in, for they insist on seeing you. [*Exit.*

Field. Good morning, Mr. Toppit; I'll leave you to the ladies. If at any other time—

Toppit. Stay, stay, Doctor: the lozenge—eh, what is it good for?

(Female voices without.) We don't mind his nightcap—we must come in.

Toppit. Mercy on me! here are the five Miss Screams on the staircase! I'll run out of the house. Come along, Doctor—If you will let me take your lozenge, I'll consent to work at your farm with all my heart.

[*Female voices, without, repeat as before.* Toppit *runs to the opposite side. Mrs.* Toppit *and several female visitors enter, and follow Mr.* Toppit *across the stage, talking loudly to him: he runs off, they pursue him.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

COUNTING-HOUSE.

Young TOPPIT *at breakfast.*

FRANK.

WHAT a happy dog I am! This was neatly thought—a melancholy tête-à-tête with Jervis down to my uncle would have been the devil; but to take the opportunity of a party with the Baron and Sir George Yawn, introduce some of my ton acquaintance to my uncle—ay, that's making the most of it. "My uncle will "have spirit enough, I trust, to conceal my fa- "ther and himself having been vintners. After "introducing myself into company, as of a gen- "tleman's family, egad, not one of my friends "would speak to me, if they knew it."

Enter a Servant, with a newspaper.

Well, is Jervis coming?

Servant. He will be here presently, Sir: and, in the mean time, has sent you the paper.

Frank. So, my death-warrant. Did he send my letter to my uncle's?

Servant.

Servant. Yes, Sir. [*Exit Servant.*

Frank. 'Twas best to let him know who was coming. (*looks at the newspaper*) Gazetted, I suppose.—Deuce take me, if I have courage to read the columns.—Egad, a newspaper wou'd furnish a fine medley sonata—I'll set it —Read the columns across, like my friend, merry Caleb, and vary the pianos and the fortes to the subject. Now! suppose that I had an orchestra before me! there, just on that side of the room! *(He holds the newspaper in his hand, reads the various lines across the columns, and appears to direct the orchestra in its accompanyments.)*

RECITATIVE AND AIR.—FRANK TOPPIT.

Recit. Yesterday the eclipse of the moon—
Was brought up for examination in *Bow*-street.
Air. Here the *violins* a little,
Twee, twee, twittle!
Recit. The *hard gale* on Tuesday night—
Wind instruments!
Gave a crowded *rout* in Portman-square—
Air. Here the *drum!*
Trum, trum, trum!
Recit. A fine plate of *strawberries* was served up—
Hautboys!——
To an over-drove *ox* running down Fleet-street:
Air. *Horns!* Ta ra!
Ta, ra, ta!
Recit. The new *ghost* that appears in the *Bird-cage* walk—
Flutes, con *spirito!*
Will accompany the flotilla to England—
Flats in C.
Air. Bravo! better cannot be.

Recit.

Recit. "Their Majesties will visit Covent-garden Theatre—
"Voices! Song!
"With the blessings of order in a land of liberty!
"Grand chorus!"

Air. Bravo! suits me to a T.
Better, better, cannot be.
Now, let all proceed together,
Lovers' Vows, with—Change of weather—
Lovers of sauces—Native groundsel—
Sun elips'd—By advice of counsel—
Fleet at Boulogne—Heads in pillory—
British spirits—Old distillery—
Bravo! bravo! that I'll swear to—
Oh! 'twill make a grand Concerto!

Hold! the devil! What's the matter?
Keep your horns there somewhat flatter!

To-night, the full-moon—
Take care you're in tune.
Gretna-Green beauty—
Post-horse duty.
Wants a good place—
Pimples on the face.
In fine preservation—
The state of the nation.
Vermicelli—
Pains in the belly.
Union of hearts—
Gooseberry tarts.
Service of the Turk—
Maid of all work.
Lott'ry—Hamburgh—Volunteers—
Ship-news—Theatres—House of Peers.

Latin

Latin—Satin—
Money—honey—
Scholars—dollars—
Sales by auction:
Teaching—bleaching—
Blacking—cracking—
Chicken—licking—
Bark decoction.

Bravo! bravo! that I'll swear to—
Oh! 'twill make a grand concerto!

Frank. This trifling will never mend my circumstances—So, at once for my fate! *(reads)*—Hem!—hem!—"On Tuesday was married John"—hem! hem!—"Yesterday died at his villa, in consequence of many medicines which he took for the recovery of his health."—Oh! why, that's like my uncle—"Fernando"—How! my uncle dead! "Fernando Toppit"—Eh! it is—it must be! Bless me! Poor old man! and I not to see him! not to ask his blessing! what an unhappy dog I am!—He was cross and crabbed, to be sure; yet—*(reads)* "The whole of his fortune, acquired by many years of very extensive trade in partnership with his brother, Mr. John Toppit"—Psha! what do they mention trade for? Cannot they leave a man alone when he is dead? "Devolves to his nephew, Frank Toppit."—Egad, that's true—Plague of the trade! I'll have the paper new printed, and the Gazette corrected, with an erratum in the bankruptcies into the bargain.

THOMAS

Servant returns.

Servant. Sir George and Major Yawn are below, Sir: "they asked if the chaises were ordered, Sir.

"*Frank* Ay, my boy, the chaises are ordered. "Oh, the devil! I shall forget my grief on the oc- "casion. *(mournfully)* Desire Sir George and the Major to walk up.

[*Servant goes to the door.*

Enter Sir GEORGE, *Baron* BIAS, *and Major* YAWN.

FRANK *receives them with an affected seriousness.*

Sir George. Well, Frank, what's the matter? We are ready to set off. What is in the wind?

Frank. I am very sorry to say, Sir George, that my uncle, to whom I proposed to have the honour of introducing you, cannot receive us.

Yawn. (*gaping*) No! why not? Has any accident befallen him?

Frank. No very new accident.

Bias. What, does he say he won't be at home?

Frank. He cannot say that.

Yawn. Some par—par—(*yawning*)—simony. He has found out that you live too freely: Hark ye, Frank, break the old fellow's heart.

Frank. I am afraid I have done thatalready—Here, read (*gives the paper to Sir* George.)

Sir George (*reads*) "Yesterday"—Eh! ha! ha! ha! (*gives the paper to Major* Yawn, *who looks and laughs, gaping at the same time.*)

Frank. Well, gentlemen, my uncle's loss may be of no great importance to you, perhaps; but I cannot see what there is so very diverting in it. (*all laugh.*)

"*Yawn.* Ha! ha! ha! Frank is affronted.

"*Sir George.* (*reads*) "His brother, John Toppit!" "that was your father. Was he ever in trade?

"*Frank.* That's some mistake in the printing." Don't laugh—you hurt my feelings.

Sir George. Why, Frank, who shou'd laugh but your friends? You know, on these occasions, a man cannot, in decency, laugh himself.

Frank. (*aside*) If I betray concern, I shall never hear the end of it. I am only vexed that it spoils our party to-day.

Bias. Why so? Do you guess what pilfering and plundering there will be immediately, unless you're on the spot?

Frank. D'ye think there will?

Sir George. We'll go as your stewards, to assist in taking the inventory of goods and chattels. Come, give us a glass of wine and a Sandwich, and then away.

Frank. 'Gad, so I will—And while we take it, I will send an express to the steward, to get things in readiness for us.

Sir George. Do so; and order every thing for your uncle's funeral.

Yawn. Ay, ay, take care of that. Bury the old fellow handsomely.

Frank. A hearse and six, eh?

Sir George. Eight.

Frank. Egad, he shall have ten; and as many more to every mourning coach. Eh! brilliant's

the thing. Though, I give you my word, gentlemen, my uncle's loss is a very serious——

Sir George, Baron, and *Major.* Oh! ha! ha! ha! Come along—come along.

[*Exeunt, hurrying* Frank *away with them.*

SCENE II.

FIELD-AIR'S FARM.

Old TOPPIT *at work in a short jacket, and holding the plough.*

Toppit. I have discovered the secret of health at last. The true elixir vitæ is this.

[*Shews the plough.*

Enter SERVANT.

Well, what do you want?

Serv. My mistress sent me to tell you, Sir, that she expects a party to go round the pleasure grounds, and desires to know if you will go with them.

Toppit. Tell them I'm in my pleasure grounds already.

Serv. And my young master has sent to say, that he will be here to-day, with some noblemen.

Toppit. Zounds! send the noblemen home again; they might as well make an inn of my

house at once, and send me back to my old trade of a vintner. Tell your mistress I wish to speak with her.

Servant. Here she comes, Sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs. TOPPIT: *at sight of Mr.* TOPPIT *she starts and shrieks.*

Mrs. Toppit. For shame, Mr. Toppit; leave off this filthy plough-sharing, and put on your coat.

Toppit. Mrs. Toppit, I won't put on my coat.

Mrs. Toppit. At your time of life! For Heaven's sake, get into your coat and your senses together.

Toppit. I'll do neither one nor the other. When I'm in my senses, as you call 'em, I have fifty thousand mortal disorders—and when I'm in my coat, I cannot follow the plough to get rid of them; so, gee!

Mrs. Toppit. Your nephew will be here presently with a party of his genteel acquaintance.

Toppit. A plague of his genteel acquaintance! What has he to do with them?

"*Mrs. Toppit.* Nay, my dear, Frank may have "his faults, but he keeps very good company— "always great lords, or great wits, about him.

"*Toppit* Yes; and is business carried on by "having great lords or great wits about you? If "Frank would keep his own *small* wits more "constantly about him, they'd be of more use "than all the *great* wits in London.—But that's "*his* business. Only let him remember that I'm "enjoying my quiet in the country, and don't let "him disturb it."

Mrs.

Mrs. Toppit. But what will Frank's friends say, if they see you working like a day-labourer?

Toppit. Say! Why, they'll say that, instead of finding an old fool studying physic, all day long, to make himself ill of all the disorders in the dictionary, they are come to see a hearty old fellow, grown wise by the study of air and exercise.

A Man on the Farm cries—Gee! Hoh!

Toppit. Gee! Hoh! There, my dear, there's lungs—See what good the plough does! I'm quite another creature. (*looks out*) What the devil does Solomon do with that frighten'd face? Ask him what he wants.

Enter SOLOMON.

Solomon. Saving your presence, Sir—

Toppit. A plague of your dismal looks! You give me the hip—What do you want?

Solomon. Saving your presence, I wanted to ax a little bit of a question, if so be I mought.

Mrs. Toppit Out with the question, you rustic, and leave off those dismal faces.

Toppit. Look at me:—d'ye see? Gay as a lark, and alive as an eel! What have you to say? (Solomon *scratches his head, embarrassed, and takes a letter from his pocket*) What's that letter?

Solomon. (*to Mrs.* Toppit) Here's a letter, Madam, come by what you call a *currier* on horseback; he rode as if the devil drove him, on purpose to bring *I* this letter from young master, who writes me as how, as old master is no more, saving your presence, he'll be here to-day, to see about

about the funeral. Do you read it, Madam; it is but a sort of a joke, I fancy.

Toppit. A joke, you dog! Is there any joke in burying me alive?

Solomon. No, no, not alive. He says, saving your presence, as how you be deceased.

Toppit. Let me see. (*takes the letter and reads*) "My uncle no more"—Take it, Mrs. Toppit—take the letter—(*trembling*) I can't read it any further.

Enter FIELD-AIR.

Oh, Doctor, I am glad to see you. I had nearly relapsed into my hypochondria and colera-morbus. Here, read this. (*gives the letter.*)

Field-Air. (*reads*) Ha! ha! ha! (*aside*) I guess whence this arises—"Eliza's paragraph in the paper," ha, ha, ha!

Toppit. What, is my decease so comical?

Solomon. Ha! ha! ha! Ay, I said it was a joke.

Field Air. (*reads*) "Your old master being no more—"

Toppit. No, no, don't read that—Go on after that.

Field-Air. "I shall be with you as soon as possible. The funeral shall be a very handsome one—"

Mrs. Toppit. Ay; Frank would order a genteel one, I warrant.

Field-Air. "Three mourning coaches—then eight horsemen—"

Mrs. Toppit. Very genteel.

Field-Air. "Then the corpse—"

Toppit.

Toppit. Then the devil!

Field-Air. (*reads*) "You shall all have new "mourning—And, as some young men of fashion "accompany me, be careful none of you drop a "word of my father and my uncle's having been "in business together—as that's a circumstance "I shall bury with my uncle."

Toppit. The rascal! Does he say so? Let me see it again. (*takes the letter and reads*) "Remember, I "give myself out of the family of the Leicester-"shire Toppits, and a near relation to the present "Sir Thomas." The dog! (*reads*) "Your new "master, Frank Toppit."—"Postscript. Let the "dinner be excellent, as I bring good judges to-"day to dine at my villa."—A graceless spend-thrift! He shall find I'll live long enough to dis-inherit him.

Field-Air. (*looks out*) What the devil's yonder?

Toppit. A hearse and eight full trot down my lawn! Coming to bury me, as sure as I'm alive. I begin to fear, Doctor, my nerves won't stand it.

Field-Air. Courage!

Toppit. And a whole crowd of undertakers! (*Undertakers enter, laughing and talking as they cross the stage*) Hollo! whom do you want?

Under. Not you. (*they cross and go off.*)

Toppit. I'm afraid that's false: however, if you do want me, you sha'n't have me this turn.

(*Noise of great laughter without.*)

Toppit. What, the devil, next?

Solomon. Lud! lud! only look! Chaises, and servants behind, all in full gallop! I saw my young master in one of them.

Toppit. They shall laugh on the other cheek—

Dine

Dine at my villa! A relation of the Leicestershire Toppits! Yes, I'll provide them a dinner that shall do Frank good for the rest of his life. Come, wife—As I am happily cured of my own disorders, it is high time I should administer to those of my nephew. Come along.

Mrs. Toppit. Not I, indeed, Mr. Toppit. I'll do nothing to mortify my dear nephew, and spoil his taste for *the genteel.*

[*Exit Mrs.* Toppit.

Toppit. Won't you? Well, what say you, Doctor?

Field-Air. With all my heart.

Toppit. Solomon and I will manage it. He is a good affectionate soul, and I may rely on his services.

Solomon. Ay, I be moderate well, as times go—and, as far as I can sarve you, I will.

Toppit. Not mention our being in trade! Forget, I suppose, that we were bustling innkeepers before he was born, and shopkeepers for twenty years afterwards! Ay, and I'll be one again.

Field-Air. Well said! I told you I should make a cure of you.

Toppit. You did: but don't mistake me, Doctor—I never had the disorder of being ashamed of having raised my own fortunes; and am more proud of having gained my bread by honest industry, than if I were related to twenty Baronets.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE III.

An Apartment.

Enter Herbert *and* Eliza.

Herbert. Ha! ha! ha! Eliza, your Paragraph has made a pretty confusion.

Eliza. It must have come to Frank's hands instead of my uncle's. What shall I do?

Herbert. Nay, let it pass now: this may be as good a way as any to cure your uncle's fancies. Have you heard what has happened?

Eliza. Yes; my aunt has just told me.

Herbert. And, what do you think your uncle is now doing? No sooner had he read your brother's letter, and found your aunt determin'd to receive his company, than away he flies to the public-house over the way, purchases the sign they had just taken down, and is now busy in hanging it up, over his own door.—If they *will* make an inn of his house, he says, it *shall* be one—and, now, they may invite as many neighbours and as much genteel company as they please.

Enter Mrs. Toppit.

Mrs. Toppit. To be sure, I'll invite my company to the Full Moon!

Solomon. (*without*) Coming, Sir—Run and take the gentlemen's horses.

Mrs. Toppit. There!—Would not any one suppose we really kept an inn? Your uncle behaves like a Turk to the dear boy. He has been giving nstructions to all the servants not to tell Frank ithe mistake he has fallen into: and you and I are to hold our tongues too!—But we'll watch for Frank, and tell him what a fool his uncle makes of himself. Come along, Eliza—Let's look out for him. Frank may be a little extravagant; but no one can deny that he has very genteel acquaintance. [*Exit with* Eliza.

Herbert. (*alone*) Where this will end, Heaven knows! Between the follies of all parties, I find it difficult to gain attention to my suit: but perseverance must prevail, and I will die rather than forfeit the heart of Eliza.

AIR.——HERBERT.

I.

The shadows of eve 'gan to steal o'er the earth,
To Eliza my heart I confess'd;
Love sanction'd the moment to Hope that gave birth;
On her lip a soft kiss I impress'd.
I saw her warm cheek like Heaven's canopy glow,
When Aurora empurples the morn:
She loves me! Oh Heav'n! let me never forego
The faith on her lip I have sworn.

II.

This bosom, tho' fervid with youth, and with health,
In all else shall persuasion control:
Bid me fly from the charm of ambition or wealth,
Or the joys of the bright sparkling bowl!

But,

But, Eliza, dear maid! till in earth I'm laid low
In my heart shall her image be borne;
While she loves me, by Heav'n! I will never forego
The faith on her lip I have sworn.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

A GARDEN NEAR THE HOUSE.

Enter ELIZA.

Eliza. Well, if my uncle chuses to humour the story I invented, even let it pass for me. I won't bear witness against myself. Yonder comes Frank—Let's see how he bears his grief on the occasion. I owe him a shrewd turn for laughing at me and Herbert in town. (*Holds her handkerchief to her eyes, as if in tears.*)

FRANK *enters cheerfully.*

Frank. Upon my soul— *sees* Eliza) Oh, yonder is Eliza! Out, handkerchief! (*advances to her, affecting great grief)* My dear Eliza! Oh! Oh!

Eliza. Oh! Oh! great loss, Frank.

Frank. Oh!

Eliza. Sad misfortune!

Frank. Oh!

Eliza. But we shall get the better of it.

Frank. Oh! Oh!, never.

Eliza. My poor uncle, you know——

Frank. Oh!

Eliza. Was very old.

Frank. That does not make our loss the less.

Eliza. You will make as good use of his money as he cou'd.

Frank. That does not cure our grief.

Eliza. Oh, the hypocrite!

DUET—ELIZA AND FRANK.

I.

Eliza. Brother, wipe those tears away!
Frank. Oh! hoh!
Eliza. Let's take comfort while we can,
Frank. Oh! hoh!
Such a good uncle! such a good man!
Both. He, alas! is turn'd to clay,
Oh! hoh!
Such a good uncle! such a good man!

II.

Eliza. Full of kindness!
Frank. Gone—so kind!
Oh! hoh!
Eliza. Full of wealth!
Frank. That's left behind!
Oh! hoh!
Eliza. Yet there's a comfort!—you are his heir,
Both. In your feelings I take share.
Yet there's a comfort { I am / you are } his heir.
Eliza. Let's forget what's past and gone,
Oh! hoh!
Grief's not good to think upon,
Fal la! la!

Since

Since to care we cann't say nay,
Oh! hoh!
'Tis the wisest thing to say
Fal lal la!

Both. Fal lal la! &c.

[Frank *by degrees assumes an air of cheerfulness, and they both go out singing* Fal lal la! *allegro.*

SCENE V.

A Dining Room.

A Sideboard set out with much decoration—Lights, &c. &c. A table in front, cloth laid for dinner.

Enter Sir George, *Major* Yawn, *and the* Baron, *preceded by* Solomon.

Solomon. This way, if you please, gentlemen. Ring the bell, to let them know in the bar that here be some customers.

Sir George. Customers! Why, pray, where are we?

Solomon. What, don't you know where you be? that's likely enough. But I'll tell you, if you don't know, that you be in one of the very best inns on the road.

All. An inn!

Solomon. An inn! ay, and you shall see the master of it by and by.

Baron. Why, what the devil is this? Does not this house belong to Mr. Toppit?

Solomon. Yes, Sir;—Mr. Toppit keeps the Full Moon.

Baron. Frank keeps half a dozen girls, but I never

never heard that any one of them went by that name. Did you, George?

Sir George. Never—But, i'faith, I saw a sign of the Full Moon over the gate.

Solomon. Gentlemen, do you like any wine? If you do, I believe you will be cunning if you get it. (*aside.*)

Sir George. What can all this mean? Where is Frank Toppit? (*to* Solomon.)

Solomon. My young master? Oh, I'll send him presently. [*Exit* Solomon.

Baron. Why, Major!

Major. Why, Baron!

[*They look with surprise at each other.*

Baron. Sir George, what do you say to this?

Sir George. Nothing. I did not come here to talk, but to dine.

Major. Pass it off—when we come to town, we'll cut him.

Enter FRANK.

Frank. Here, John, Thomas: make haste with the dinner; well, gentlemen, what say you to my villa?

Sir George. The villa is well enough; but what, the devil, is that picture of the Full Moon over the gate?

Frank. The full devil! you are talking of the public-house over the way.

[*They wink at each other.*

Major. There's written under it, "Dinners drest at short notice."

Frank. Ha! ha! ha! I am sure that's not written at *my* house.—John! Thomas!—Zounds, these fellows don't think that we are to cut

cut in again at the masquerade by three—That was a neat thought, George—The only place I can decently appear at, till my uncle is buried, is the masquerade.

Enter SOLOMON, *with three Servants, who place covered dishes on the table.*

Frank. Come, take your seats. Odso! here comes my aunt. (*aside*) " If I can but make her hold her tongue about the *extensive trade*—

Enter Mrs. TOPPIT—FRANK *runs to her, embraces her, and, at the same time, prevents her from advancing.*

" *Mrs. Toppit.* Oh, my dear Frank, I'm so " glad I've found you!

" *Frank.* My dear aunt! *(in a half whisper)* " Not a word of my uncle's having been in " trade.—My friends, Sir George, and Major " Yawn, and Baron Bias.

" *Mrs. Toppit. (curtseying)* I hope they'll all " take their beds here to-night. I am quite " ashamed that your uncle——

" *Frank.* Oh, don't mention my uncle—try to " compose your spirits, my dear Mrs. Toppit.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* Not mention him! You don't " know, Frank——

" *Frank.* Oh, yes, I do know.—My dear " aunt, you hear I know all. *(whispers)* But you " need not mention to the gentlemen, that— " (*aloud*) Don't talk of my uncle, 'twill affect you " too much.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* My dear boy, I tell you—

" *Frank.*

" *Frank.* Mrs. Toppit, don't speak—I see you " are agitated.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* Your uncle was——

" *Frank.* Don't say what he was—My dear " aunt, pray be composed.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* I tell you, your uncle——

" *Frank.* She'll go into hysterics.—Pray be " more quiet—don't speak.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* I must speak.

" *Frank.* No, you must not.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* But I tell you I must, Frank. " How can you be so provoking? *(cries.)*

" *Frank.* Hysterics! I thought so.

" *Mrs. Toppit.* Oh, oh! between you and your " uncle, you'll break my heart. *(runs off crying.)*"

Frank. " Poor creature! quite overcome—But " she'll recover in the air."—Now for the dinner at last. *(they all sit)* I hope your appetites are good, my boys.

Sir George. Oh! never fear us.—A very handsome service, Frank.

Frank. Yes, my uncle was elegant in all his establishments. Baron, see what you have before you. Now, Sir George, what shall I give you? *(lifts the cover of the dish before him)* Why, what the devil! here's an empty plate!

Baron Bias. And here's another! *(lifts the cover.)*

Yawn. Why, Frank, your cook is a damn'd impudent blockhead—he has forgot the bill of fare.

Solomon. Ay, our head cook will tell you all about *that*.

Frank.

Frank. Zounds! where is your head cook, as you call him?

[*During this conversation* Toppit *enters with a large dish in his hand, and on coming in front of* Frank, Frank *jumps up from his chair. All rise.*

Toppit. Frank, Frank, I sweat at your impudence: to set yourself down with these gentlemen! you, who are nothing but a poor cook's son, and see your own uncle bringing up the dinner!

Sir George. What! your uncle alive! and your father a cook!

Yawn. What! are we come to dine with the son of a turnspit?

Frank. The devil! this is all a trick upon me. My father was no cook, nor my uncle neither.

Toppit. No cook! you ungracious boy! I am the first of cooks. No cook! Oh, you wicked varlet! you wish to take away your poor uncle's character.

[*During this,* Frank *expresses great surprise, but appears at last to take his resolution.*

Frank. (aside) I'll be even with old square-toes, however. Hark ye, Mr. Ladle Carrier, you are no uncle of mine: my uncle was a gentleman, and I am come to bury him like one; he is deceased. You know it as well as I.

Toppit. If either of these things were true, I ought, Frank, to know them better than you. But they are lies, both of them.

Frank. My uncle's death was in a Paragraph in the papers this morning.

Toppit. You put the Paragraph in the papers yourself. I'm no more dead than you are.

Frank. Get out directly, or I'll—

Toppit. Get out! Hark ye, Frank, you cannot deny that I am a cook, for I drest this dinner; and, to prove that I am master of my own house—"There, gentlemen—(*goes to the table* "*and overturns it*) There, Frank, there's my in-"vitation to you and your company"—Not one of you shall touch a morsel of it. I am sorry, gentlemen, to have disturbed the pleasure of my nephew's party into the country, but if either of you is distressed for a carriage back to town, there is one which came for me this morning with eight horses, very much at your service.

Frank. Major! Baron!—I beg—

Yawn, Baron Bias, and *Sir George.* Ha! ha! ha!

Yawn. You're a good fellow, Frank! but keep to your kitchen! [*They go off laughing.*

Frank. Zounds, uncle, why won't you own that you're no cook?

Toppit. Why won't you own, you dog, that I'm no corpse?

Enter Mrs. TOPPIT, ELIZA, FIELD-AIR, *and* HERBERT.

Mrs. Toppit. Oh, Frank! I hope the gentlemen will overlook this—

[*Mrs.* Toppit *runs to* Frank; *they both appear vexed, and converse together.*

Eliza. What has been the matter, Sir?

Toppit. Ask that fellow there—he first tries to ruin me by his extravagance, and then wants to provide for me, by burying me alive.

Field-

Field-Air. Come, Eliza can explain this.—The Paragraph was an innocent frolic, intended to cure an invalid of his nonsensical fancies—You shall forgive her.

Eliza. Indeed, Sir, I only meant it to do you good.

Toppit. I understand you: you kindly intended to frighten me to death, in order to save my life. "Well, if it has been of use towards reclaiming Frank, I forgive you the stratagem.

"*Frank.* I see my errors, Sir, and was already "resolved on reforming, when—

"*Toppit.* When you thought there was no "longer any need of reformation. 'Tis no un-"usual moment for good resolutions.

"*Field-Air.* Come, come, you shall go to town "to-morrow, settle your nephew's affairs, and "then forgive him too.

"*Toppit.* Shall I?

"*Field-Air.* Ay. There is nothing so good "for the nerves as to be in constant good hu-"mour with ourselves.

"*Toppit.* And what is your prescription for "that?

"*Field-Air.* To be conscious of always de-"serving the good will of others. Here are two, "whom you can make happy by a word."

Toppit. (*takes* Herbert *and* Eliza's *hands*) You two shall be married to-morrow morning. The bells shall ring, while I go to town to settle young Graceless's affairs, that the noise may be all over when I return. Field-Air, I'll henceforth be your patient only: I renounce all medicine but mirth, and shall hope never to look on my hearse again, as long as I live.

Enter several of the Neighbours.

FINALE.

Good health, we all a blessing hold,
Beyond the worth of worlds in gold;
But there's another blessing still,
'Tis this—to gain the World's good will.

Some smiling looks, we trust, are here,
To give our vows a hearty cheer;
Both long the THRONE OF ENGLAND fill!
HEALTH'S BLESSING, and the WORLD'S GOOD WILL!

THE END.

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